

# Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force



## NEWS RELEASE

An Eradication Plan is released to the public and permit applications have been filed with state agencies.

### **Steering Committee**

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program

Darrin Fresh Water Institute

FUND for Lake George

Lake Champlain Basin Program

Lake George Association

Lake George Watershed Coalition

NYS Adirondack Park Agency

NYS Department of Environmental  
Conservation

NYS Lake George Park Commission

### **Advisory Committee**

Bateaux Below

Dome Island Committee

Innerspace Scientific Diving

Lake George Waterkeeper

Scientific Diving International

University of California Davis Tahoe  
Environmental Research Center

University of Nevada Reno

Vermont Department of Environmental  
Conservation

*Task Force working to implement an eradication effort soon after ice-out in early April 2011, which will be completed in mid-July.*

*Eradication effort focuses on suction harvesting near-shore, around docks, and in front of beaches combined with use of benthic barrier weighted on the lake bottom. These methods have been successfully used in other lakes.*

For more information see media contacts below.

March 18, 2011

Lake George, NY – The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force, a coalition of community organizations, scientists and regulatory agencies, has released a *Plan to Eradicate the Infestation of the Invasive Asian Clam in Lake George*. The invasive Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) was discovered in August 2010 in the Village of Lake George and poses a serious threat to the long-term ecological health of the lake. The plan details a response effort to try and eradicate the Asian clam infestation, starting in early April 2011. The treatment effort combines limited suction harvesting to remove six inches of sediment and Asian clams from areas near-shore, under docks, and in front of beaches along with use of benthic barrier weighted down on the lake bottom for an extended period of time to cut off oxygen supplies to the clams. Both methods have been used successfully in other locations.

The eradication plan provides information on the status of the Asian clams in Lake George. It is believed that they have been in the lake for

(over)



The area of infestation in Lake George Village.

2-3 years and have completed 4-6 reproduction cycles. Asian clam can reproduce twice annually with one clam releasing 2,000-4,000 offspring each cycle. Scientists found populations highest and densest in a 4.8 acre area closest to shore with another 3.3 acre area of possible small populations. Asian clams in the lake seem to prefer open, coarse grainy sand areas without a lot of plant life. Though a 10-mile area around the south end of Lake George was surveyed, from Diamond Point to Dunham's Bay, no other Asian clam populations were found.

“The Plan to Eradicate the Asian Infestation in Lake George is for the public to fully explain the enormous threat posed to Lake George and the response organized by a wide coalition of interests to try and eradicate this invasive species” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the FUND for Lake George. “The Eradication Plan details the threats posed by the Asian clam to Lake George, the extent of the infestation in the Village across a 5-8 acre area, the science behind our decisions, the methods and scope of the eradication effort planned to begin in April, and details the various permits that we need to obtain to start. We’re hopeful of success, but know that Asian clams have spread widely through the U.S. and are tough to dislodge where they become established.”

“The plan for Asian clam rapid response and management in Lake George is by far the most complex aquatic invasive species management plan I have been involved with during three years as AIS coordinator for the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program. The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force has put together a fantastic team of experts and community leaders to address a serious economic and ecological threat to Lake George” said Tyler Smith of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program.

The eradication plan focuses on two methods. First, suction harvesting will be used across a 2.5 acre area to remove 6 inches of sediment from the lake bottom. This material will be transferred to dewatering bags on shore at two locations and once dewatering is completed sediment will be transported to locations away from the lake. Suction harvesting will occur along the shoreline, under and around docks, and in front of beach areas. Second, benthic barrier will be installed in a 3.25 acre area. “After careful analysis of the results from a Pilot Study examining the effectiveness of different types of benthic barrier, for different treatment periods (15-45 days) to reduce dissolved oxygen under mats and kill Asian clams, we determined that the use PVC mats for 45 days



Asian clams can reach the size of a dime or larger in 2-3 years.

would be the most effective treatment strategy for matted areas” said Dr. Sandra Nierzwicki-Bauer, Director of the RPI Darrin Fresh Water Institute in Bolton Landing. A total 5.23 acre area will be treated initially. It is expected that the suction harvesting will be completed by early May and benthic barrier installation by mid-May. Benthic barrier must remain in place for a period of 45 days to achieve certain clam mortality. Once the barrier is put in place, scientific testing will occur throughout the dredged area to determine if any clams remain and outside the barrier area to try and locate any satellite populations. Any populations found will be treated with benthic barrier.

It’s important to complete the suction harvesting and benthic barrier installation before water temperatures reach 59 degrees (15 degrees C), the point at which clams become active and begin reproduction. It’s also noted that delay in treatment until the fall of 2011 would mean that the area of infestation would likely be substantially larger due to additional reproduction cycles. Mats will begin to be removed in late June and completely removed by mid-July. The eradication effort will cost upwards of \$400,000 and costs for services, equipment and scientific monitoring. Additionally, groups involved and local municipalities are providing over \$100,000 in in-kind services.

The Task Force has submitted various permit applications to the Adirondack Park Agency, Department of Environmental Conservation, and US Army Corp of Engineers. The Lake George Park Commission is the Lead Agency under SEQRA. The Task Force has also consulted and received authorization from the Office of General Services and State Historic Preservation Office. No local permit is necessary, though the Village of Lake George has been briefed on this effort and is fully supportive and cooperating with planning. Many of the impacted shoreline businesses have also been briefed. The area of infestation stretches from the south edge of the English Brook delta area to Pine Point. “We are doing our best to minimize the impact of the project on local businesses and lake users and we are more than happy to sit down with anyone and review the plan with them to make sure any concerns they have are answered” said Emily DeBolt, Director of Education, Lake George Association.

## **Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force**

The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force is managing the eradication effort. This Task Force includes a wide variety of organizations, scientists and agencies. The Task Force includes the RPI Darrin Fresh Water Institute, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, FUND for Lake George, Lake Champlain Basin Program, Lake George Association, the NYS Lake George Park Commission, Dome Island Committee, Lake George Watershed Coalition, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Adirondack Park Agency, Bateaux Below, Inc., InnerSpace Scientific Diving, Scientific Diving International, and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation as well as researchers from Lake Tahoe.

“Members of the Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force have put forth considerable time, resources, and expertise into managing Asian clam in Lake George and protecting the lake’s ecosystem” said Meg Modley, Aquatic Invasive Species Management Coordinator of the Lake Champlain Basin Program. “The early detection and rapid response efforts to eliminate the Asian clam population in Lake George serves to protect Lake Champlain and other surrounding lakes from this harmful aquatic invasive species.”

### **Eradication Plan Available on Various Websites**

The *Plan to Eradicate the Infestation of the Invasive Asian Clam in Lake George* is available on the websites of various organizations, including the Lake George Association ([www.lakegeorgeassociation.org](http://www.lakegeorgeassociation.org)), the FUND for Lake George ([www.fundforlakegeorge.org](http://www.fundforlakegeorge.org)), and the Lake George Watershed Coalition ([www.lakegeorge2000.org](http://www.lakegeorge2000.org)).

### **For more information:**

Tyler Smith/Hilary Smith  
Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program/518.576.2082 x131

Sandra Nierzwicki-Bauer  
RPI Darrin Fresh Water Institute/518.644.3541

Peter Bauer  
FUND for Lake George/518.668.9700 x304 (cell) 518.796.0112

Meg Modley  
Lake Champlain Basin Program/802.372.3213

Emily DeBolt  
Lake George Association/518.668.3558

Mike White  
NYS Lake George Park Commission/518.668.9347

David Decker  
Lake George Watershed Coalition/518.461.2200

##